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Karda et al.

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(54) **MULTI-BIT FERROELECTRIC MEMORY DEVICE AND METHODS OF FORMING THE SAME**

(58) **Field of Classification Search**
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This patent is subject to a terminal disclaimer.

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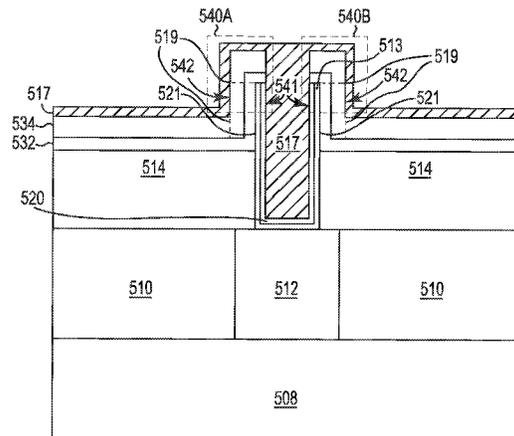
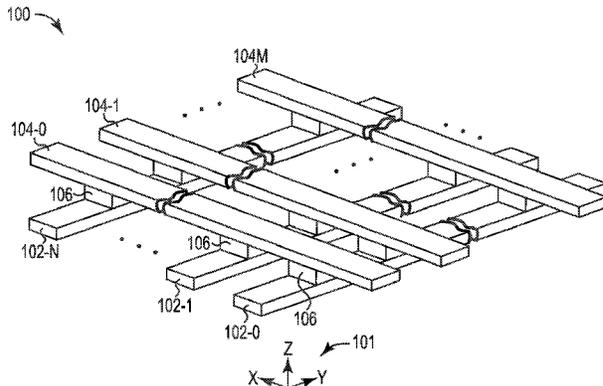
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

Multi-bit ferroelectric memory devices and methods of forming the same are provided. One example method of forming a multi-bit ferroelectric memory device can include forming a first ferroelectric material on a first side of a via, removing a material to expose a second side of the via, and forming second ferroelectric material on the second side of the via at a different thickness compared to the first side of the via.

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20 Claims, 8 Drawing Sheets



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continuation of application No. 14/068,887, filed on Oct. 31, 2013, now Pat. No. 9,219,225.

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H01L 27/11507 (2017.01)
H01L 43/02 (2006.01)

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See application file for complete search history.

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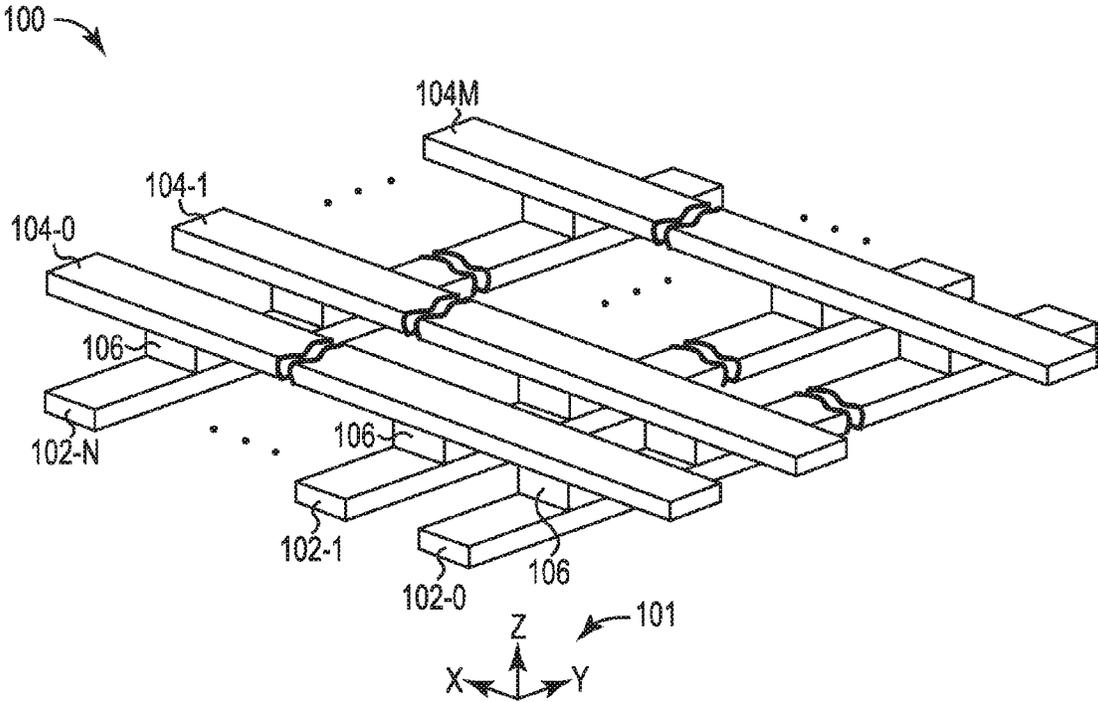


Fig. 1A

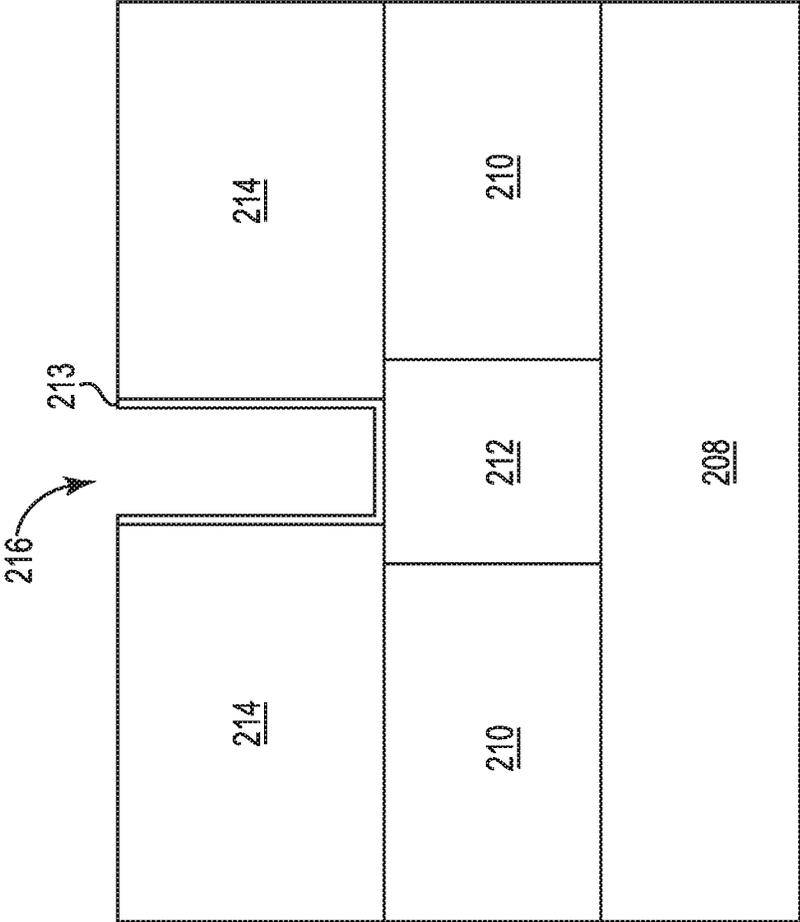


Fig. 2

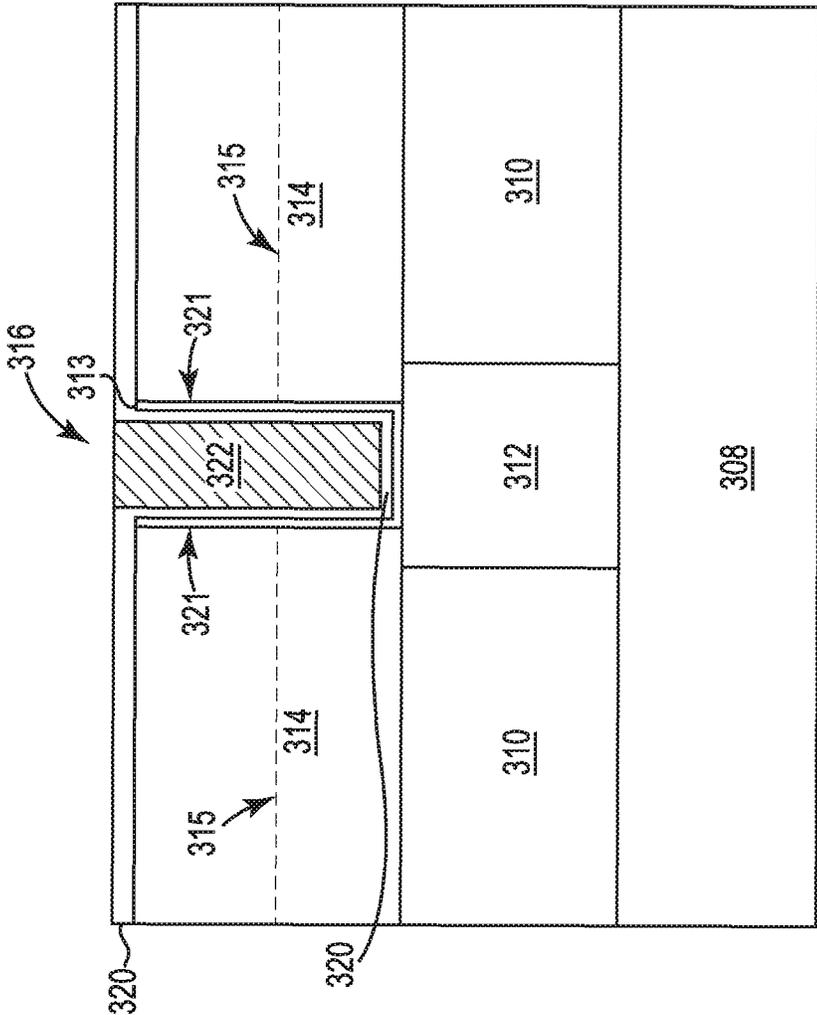


Fig. 3

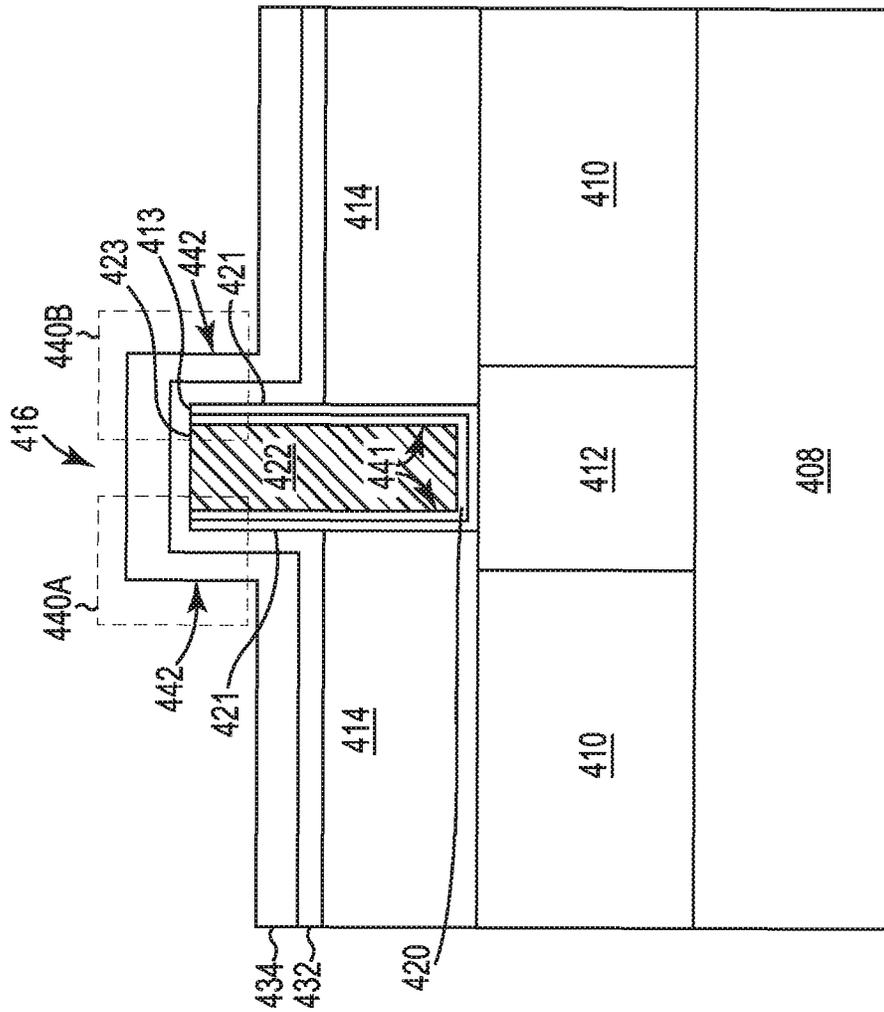


Fig. 4

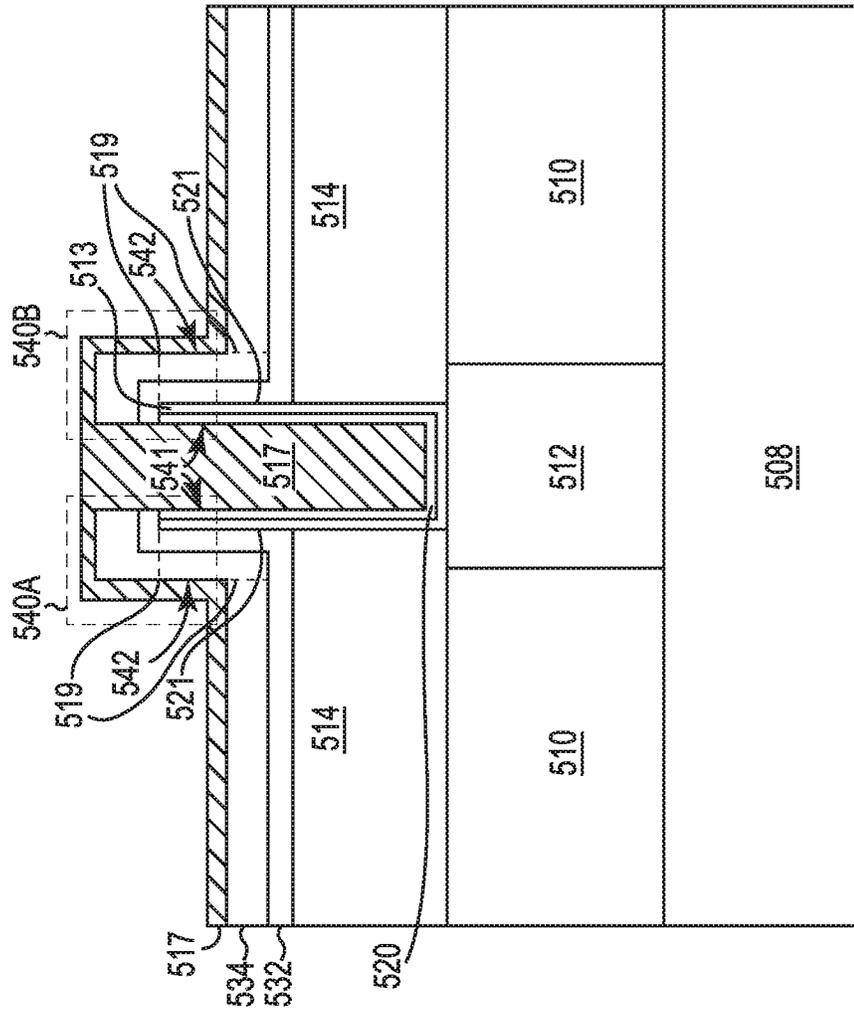


Fig. 5

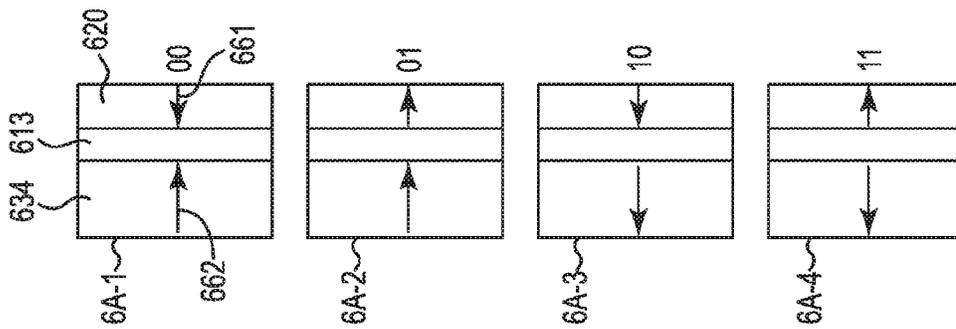


Fig. 6A

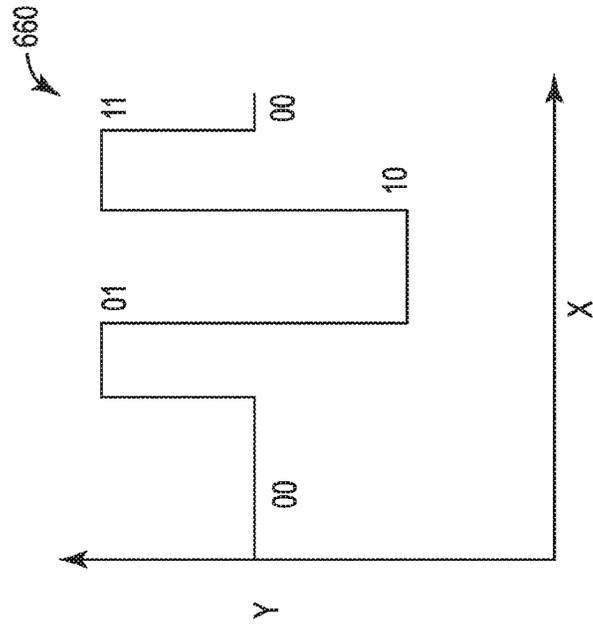


Fig. 6B

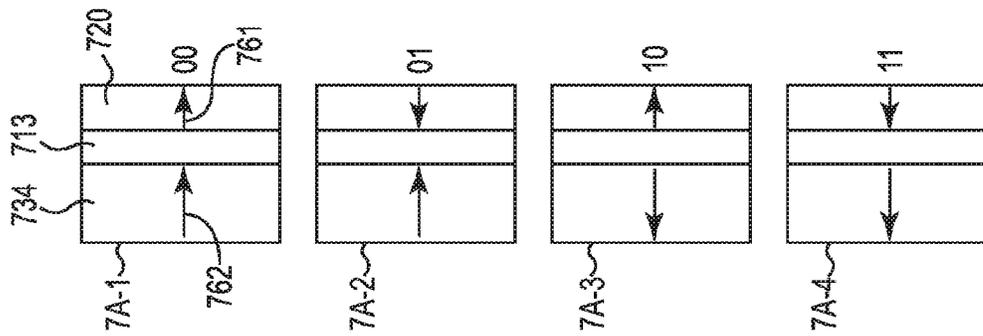


Fig. 7A

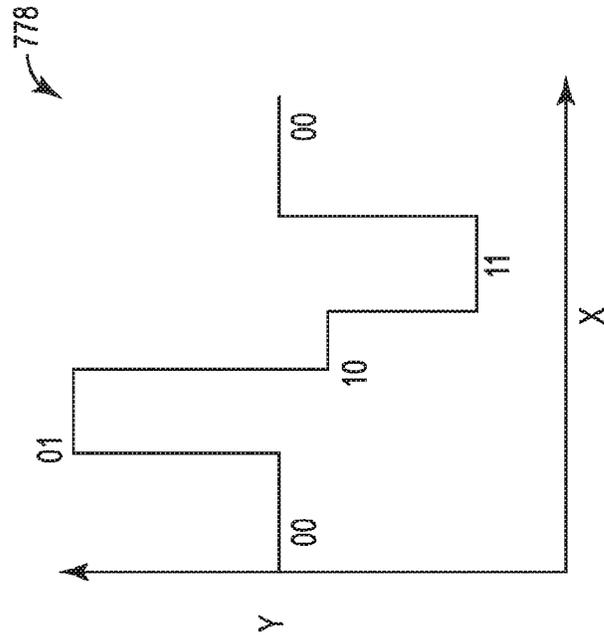


Fig. 7B

MULTI-BIT FERROELECTRIC MEMORY DEVICE AND METHODS OF FORMING THE SAME

PRIORITY INFORMATION

This application is a Continuation of U.S. application Ser. No. 14/941,088 filed Nov. 13, 2015, which is a Continuation of U.S. application Ser. No. 14/068,887 filed Oct. 31, 2013, now U.S. Pat. No. 9,219,225, the specifications of which are incorporated herein by reference.

BACKGROUND

Memory devices are typically provided as internal, semiconductor, integrated circuits in computers or other electronic devices. There are many different types of memory, including random-access memory (RAM), read only memory (ROM), dynamic random access memory (DRAM), synchronous dynamic random access memory (SDRAM), resistive memory, and flash memory, among others. Types of resistive memory include phase change memory, programmable conductor memory, and resistive random access memory (RRAM), among others.

Some types of memory devices can be non-volatile memory and can be used for a wide range of electronic applications in need of high memory densities, high reliability, and low power consumption. Non-volatile memory may be used in, for example, personal computers, portable memory sticks, solid state drives (SSDs), digital cameras, cellular telephones, portable music players such as MP3 players, movie players, and other electronic devices.

Various resistive memory devices can include arrays of memory cells organized in a cross point architecture. In such architectures, the memory cells can include a cell stack comprising a storage element, e.g., a phase change element, in series with a select device, e.g., a switching element such as an ovonic threshold switch (OTS) or diode, between a pair of conductive lines, e.g., between an access line e.g., word line and a data/sense line e.g., bit line. The memory cells are located at the intersections of a word line and bit line and can be "selected" via application of appropriate voltages thereto.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1A illustrates a perspective view of a portion of a memory array in accordance with a number of embodiments of the present disclosure.

FIG. 1B illustrates a schematic diagram of a portion of a memory array in accordance with a number of embodiments of the present disclosure.

FIG. 2 illustrates a cross-sectional view of a portion of a multi-bit ferroelectric device formed in accordance with a number of embodiments of the present disclosure.

FIG. 3 illustrates a cross-sectional view of a portion of a multi-bit ferroelectric device formed in accordance with a number of embodiments of the present disclosure.

FIG. 4 illustrates a cross-sectional view of a portion of a multi-bit ferroelectric device formed in accordance with a number of embodiments of the present disclosure.

FIG. 5 illustrates a cross-sectional view of a portion of a multi-bit ferroelectric device formed in accordance with a number of embodiments of the present disclosure.

FIGS. 6A and 6B illustrate an example of a write scheme utilizing a multi-bit ferroelectric device formed in accordance with a number of embodiments of the present disclosure.

FIGS. 7A and 7B illustrate an example of a write scheme utilizing a multi-bit ferroelectric device formed in accordance with a number of embodiments of the present disclosure.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Multi-bit ferroelectric devices (e.g., multi-bit ferroelectric memory devices) and methods of forming the same are provided. One example method of forming a multi-bit ferroelectric memory device can include forming a first ferroelectric material on a first side of a via, removing a dielectric material to expose a second side of the via, and forming second ferroelectric material on the second side of the via at a different thickness compared to the first side of the via. The multi-bit ferroelectric memory device can include a number of polarization combinations that can be used to assign multiple states (e.g., state 00, state 01, state 10, state 11, etc.). The multi-bit ferroelectric memory device can be formed to include multiple sides with each side having a different coercive field (e.g., intensity of a bias that is needed to switch the polarization of the ferroelectric material). The different coercive fields can enable independent switching of the polarization of each side of the multi-bit ferroelectric memory device. Independent switching of the polarization of each side of the multi-bit ferroelectric memory device can include switching one side of the multi-bit ferroelectric memory device without switching a different side of the multi-bit ferroelectric memory device.

A number of writing and reading schemes can be implemented utilizing the multi-bit ferroelectric memory device as described herein. Biases can be applied to the multi-bit ferroelectric memory device to generate a number of polarization combinations between the multiple sides of ferroelectric material. That is, a state can be assigned to each of a number of polarization combinations and a bias can be applied to the multi-bit ferroelectric memory device to express each of the number of polarization combinations.

Embodiments of the present disclosure can provide benefits such as a memory device comprising ferroelectric material that can have a plurality of assigned states. Each of the assigned states can also store an applied charge that is equivalent to a single bit DRAM cell charge that can be released to a bit line within a memory array. In the following detailed description of the present disclosure, reference is made to the accompanying drawings that form a part hereof, and in which is shown by way of illustration how one or more embodiments of the disclosure may be practiced. These embodiments are described in sufficient detail to enable those of ordinary skill in the art to practice the embodiments of this disclosure, and it is to be understood that other embodiments may be utilized and that process, electrical, and/or structural changes may be made without departing from the scope of the present disclosure.

The figures herein follow a numbering convention in which the first digit or digits correspond to the drawing figure number and the remaining digits identify an element or component in the drawing. Similar elements or components between different figures may be identified by the use of similar digits. For example, **210** may reference element "10" in FIG. 2, and a similar element may be referenced as **310** in FIG. 3. Also, as used herein, "a number of" a particular element and/or feature can refer to one or more of such elements and/or features.

FIG. 1A illustrates a perspective view of a portion of a memory array **100** in accordance with a number of embodiments of the present disclosure. In this example, the array

100 is a cross-point array 100 including memory cells 106 at the intersections of a first number of conductive lines 102-0, 102-1, . . . , 102-N, e.g., access lines, which may be referred to herein as word lines, and a second number of conductive lines 104-0, 104-1, . . . , 104-M, e.g., data/sense lines, which may be referred to herein as bit lines. Coordinate axis 101 indicates that the bit lines 104-0, 104-1, . . . , 104-M are oriented in an x-direction and the word lines 102-0, 102-1, . . . , 102-N are oriented in a y-direction, in this example. As illustrated, the word lines 102-0, 102-1, . . . , 102-N are substantially parallel to each other and are substantially orthogonal to the bit lines 104-0, 104-1, . . . , 104-M, which are substantially parallel to each other; however, embodiments are not so limited. As used herein, the term “substantially” intends that the modified characteristic needs not be absolute, but is close enough so as to achieve the advantages of the characteristic. For example, “substantially parallel” is not limited to absolute parallelism, and can include orientations that are at least closer to a parallel orientation than a perpendicular orientation. Similarly, “substantially orthogonal” is not limited to absolute orthogonalism, and can include orientations that are at least closer to a perpendicular orientation than a parallel orientation.

The cross-point array 100 can be an array structure such as that described below in connection with FIGS. 2, 3, and 4, for instance. As an example, the memory cells 106 can be phase change random access memory (PCRAM) cells, resistive random access memory (RRAM) cells, conductive random access memory (CBRAM) cells, and/or spin transfer torque random access memory (STT-RAM) cells, among other types of memory cells. In various embodiments, the memory cells 106 can have a “stack” structure that includes a select device, e.g., a switching device, coupled in series to a storage element, e.g., a resistive storage element comprising a phase change material or metal oxide. As an example, the select device can be a diode, field effect transistor (FET), a bipolar junction transistor (BJT), or an ovonic threshold switch (OTS), among other switching elements.

In a number of embodiments, the select device and storage element associated with the respective memory cells 106 can be series coupled two-terminal devices. For instance, the select device can be a two-terminal OTS, e.g., a chalcogenide alloy formed between a pair of electrodes, and the storage element can be a two-terminal phase change storage element, e.g., a phase change material (PCM) formed between a pair of electrodes. In a number of embodiments, an electrode can be shared between the select device and storage element of the memory cells 106. Also, in a number of embodiments, the bit lines 104-0, 104-1, . . . , 104-M and the word lines 102-0, 102-1, . . . , 102-N can serve as top or bottom electrodes corresponding to the memory cells 106.

In operation, the memory cells 106 of array 100 can be programmed by applying a voltage, e.g., a write voltage, across the memory cells 106 via selected conductive lines, e.g., word lines 102-0, 102-1, . . . , 102-N and bit lines 104-0, 104-1, . . . , 104-M. The width and/or magnitude of the voltage pulses across the memory cells 106 can be adjusted, e.g., varied, in order to program the memory cells 106 to particular logic states, e.g., by adjusting a resistance level of the storage element.

A sensing, e.g., read, operation can be used to determine the logic state of a memory cell 106. For instance, particular voltages can be applied to a bit line 104-0, 104-1, . . . , 104-M and word line 102-0, 102-1, . . . , 102-N corresponding to a selected memory cell 106, and current through the cell responsive to a resulting voltage difference can be

sensed. Sensing operations can also include biasing unselected word lines and bit lines, e.g., word lines and bit lines coupled to non-selected cells, at particular voltages in order to sense the logic state of a selected cell 106.

As an example, the array 100 can be operated in accordance with a half select method, e.g., a half select biasing scheme. A half select method can include applying a half select voltage ($V/2$) to a selected bit line, e.g., a bit line coupled to a selected memory cell, and a negative half select voltage ($-V/2$) to a selected word line, e.g., a word line coupled to the selected memory cell, while biasing unselected word lines and bit lines at a reference potential, e.g., a ground potential. As such, a full select voltage (V) is applied across the selected memory cell. In this example, the unselected memory cells coupled to the selected bit line and/or selected word line experience a half select voltage of $\pm V/2$ and can be referred to as “half selected” cells. The select devices can allow current through selected memory cells, e.g., cells experiencing the full select voltage (V), while blocking or limiting current through unselected cells coupled to a selected word line and/or bit line, e.g., cells experiencing the half select voltage. In this example, unselected memory cells coupled to unselected bit lines and/or word lines are unbiased, e.g., they experience a ground potential of OV, in this example. The select voltage (V) can be a write voltage or a read voltage, for instance. Embodiments of the present disclosure are not limited to a half select method associated with programming or reading cells of array 100. For instance, the array 100 can be operated in accordance with other biasing schemes, such as a one third select method, among other biasing schemes.

FIG. 1B illustrates a schematic diagram of a portion of a memory array 100 in accordance with a number of embodiments of the present disclosure. In this example, the memory array 100 is a DRAM array of 1T1C (one transistor one capacitor) memory cells each comprised of an access device 103 (e.g., transistor) and a storage element 105 (e.g., a capacitor) within area 106. The cells of array 100 are arranged in rows coupled by word lines 102-0 (WL0), 102-1 (WL1), 102-2, (WL2) 102-3 (WL3), . . . , 102-N (WLN) and columns coupled by sense lines (e.g., digit lines) 104-1 (D) and 104-2 (D₋). In this example, each column of cells is associated with a pair of complementary sense lines 104-1 (D) and 104-2 (D₋).

Although only a single column of memory cells is illustrated in FIG. 1B, embodiments are not so limited. For instance, a particular array may have a number of columns of memory cells and/or sense lines (e.g., 4,096, 8,192, 16,384, etc.). A gate of a particular memory cell transistor 103 is coupled to its corresponding word line 102-0, 102-1, 102-2, 102-3, . . . , 102-N, a first source/drain region is coupled to its corresponding sense line 104-1, and a second source/drain region of a particular memory cell transistor is coupled to its corresponding capacitor 105. Although not illustrated in FIG. 4, the sense line 104-2 may also be coupled to a number of memory cells. In some embodiments of the present disclosure, the capacitor 105 is a multi-bit ferroelectric device that is produced utilizing the process described herein.

The array 100 is coupled to sensing circuitry in accordance with a number of embodiments of the present disclosure. In this example, the sensing circuitry comprises a sense amplifier 107 and an accumulator.

The example shown in FIG. 1B includes isolation circuitry 471-1 located between the sense amplifier 107 and the memory cells coupled to digit line 104-1 and isolation circuitry 109-2 located between sense amplifier 107 and

memory cells (not shown) coupled to complementary sense line **104-2**. The isolation circuitry **109-1** and/or **109-2** can comprise a number of isolation devices, such as a number of transistors.

FIG. 2 illustrates a cross-sectional view of a portion of a multi-bit ferroelectric device formed in accordance with embodiments of the present disclosure. The multi-bit ferroelectric device cell structure shown in FIG. 2 includes a base semiconductor structure that includes a substrate **208** including a conductive contact **212** formed in a first dielectric material **210**. The substrate **208** can be a silicon substrate, silicon on insulator (SOI) substrate, or silicon on sapphire (SOS) substrate, among others. The first dielectric material **210** can be a nitride or oxide such as silicon dioxide (SiO₂), among other dielectric materials. The conductive contact **212** can be made of tungsten (W) or other suitable conductive material and can be formed in the first dielectric material **210** via a masking and etching process, for instance. The conductive contact **212** can be made of various conductive materials or composite structures including TiN (titanium nitride), TaN (tantalum nitride), copper, iridium, platinum, ruthenium, and/or tungsten, for example.

The structure includes a via **216** formed over the conductive contact **212**. In this example, the via **216** is formed through a second dielectric material **214** (e.g., silicon dioxide) to expose the top surface of the conductive contact **212** and can be referred to as a contact hole or contact via **216**. The second dielectric material **214** can be the same type of dielectric material or a different type of dielectric material as the first dielectric material **210**. In one or more embodiments, the via **216** has a diameter of not greater than 20 nanometers (nm). However, embodiments are not limited to a particular diameter of via **216**, which can be formed by masking and etching, among other suitable processes. A number of etchants can be utilized to remove the second dielectric material including, but not limited to: ethylenediamine pyrocatechol (EDP), potassium hydroxide/isopropyl alcohol (KOH/IPA), or tetramethylammonium hydroxide (TMAH). Although not shown in FIG. 2, the conductive contact **212** can be coupled to an access device (e.g., an access transistor) corresponding to a particular memory cell (e.g., a resistance variable memory cell such as a PCRAM cell or RRAM cell, multi-bit ferroelectric memory device as described herein).

A conductive material or composite structure **213** can be deposited in the via **216**. The conductive material or composite structure **213** can be made of various conductive materials or composite structures including TiN (titanium nitride), TaN (tantalum nitride), copper, iridium, platinum, ruthenium, and/or tungsten, for example. The conductive material or composite structure **213** can be evenly deposited on the interior of the via **216**. As described herein, the conductive material or composite structure **213** can protect a deposited ferroelectric material from an etching step to remove a portion of the dielectric material **214**.

FIG. 3 illustrates a cross-sectional view of a portion of a multi-bit ferroelectric device formed in accordance with embodiments of the present disclosure. FIG. 3 includes a number of the same elements as described in reference to FIG. 2. For example, FIG. 3 includes a substrate **308** including a conductive contact **312** formed in a first dielectric material **310**. In addition, FIG. 3 includes a via **316** formed through a second dielectric material **314**.

A first ferroelectric material **320** can be deposited on the second dielectric material **314** and in the via **316**. The first ferroelectric material **320** can include a doped Hafnium Oxide (HfO₂), a perovskite material such as calcium tita-

nium oxide (CaTiO₃), and/or a number of other thin film materials that have ferroelectric properties. The ferroelectric properties of the first ferroelectric material **320** can include, but are not limited to, a material that includes a spontaneous electric polarization (e.g., inherent electric polarization). The electric polarization of the first ferroelectric material **320** can be in a first direction and the electric polarization of the first ferroelectric material **320** can be changed to a second direction upon an application of a bias. The bias includes establishing predetermined voltages and/or currents at various points for establishing particular operating conditions. That is, the bias is an application of a particular voltage and/or current to change the direction of the electric polarization to a desired direction. The ferroelectric material can be deposited at a first thickness of approximately 2-10 nanometers.

After depositing the first ferroelectric material **320**, a poly material **322** can be deposited in the via **316**. The poly material **322** can include a number of materials. For example, the poly material **322** can include poly methyl methacrylate (PMMA). In another example, the poly material **322** can include a dielectric material that is the same as or similar to the first dielectric material **310** and/or the second dielectric material **314**. The poly material is deposited to protect the deposited first ferroelectric material **320** within the via **316** from an etching process to remove a portion of the second dielectric material **314**. That is, the poly material **322** can include a material that will protect the first ferroelectric material **320** within via **316** from an etching process to remove a portion of the second dielectric material **314** below an upper surface of the poly material **322**. The conductive material or composite structure **313** deposited within the via **316**, as described in reference to FIG. 2 (e.g., conductive material or composite structure **213**), can protect the first ferroelectric material **320** from the etching process to remove the portion of the second dielectric material **314**.

The dashed line within second dielectric material **314** can represent a stopping point **315** for the second dielectric material **314** to be removed utilizing an etching process. That is, the top portion of the second dielectric material **314** is removed to expose a second side **321** of the via **316** for depositing a second ferroelectric material. The etching process removes the portion of second dielectric material **314** without removing the first ferroelectric material **320** within the via **316** or the poly material **322** within the via **316**. For example, the top portion (e.g., portion above the stopping point **315**) of second dielectric material **314** can be removed utilizing a selective isotopic etch process that prefers removing the second dielectric material **314** over the poly material **322** and/or the first ferroelectric material **320**. In this example, the selective isotopic etch process can be stopped at the stopping point **315** to expose the second side **321** of the via **316**.

FIG. 4 illustrates a cross-sectional view of a portion of a multi-bit ferroelectric device formed in accordance with embodiments of the present disclosure. FIG. 4 includes a number of elements as described in reference to FIG. 2 and FIG. 3. For example, FIG. 4 includes a substrate **408** including a conductive contact **412** formed in a first dielectric material **410**. In addition, FIG. 4 includes a via **416** formed through a second dielectric material **414**. The second dielectric material **414** represents the remaining portion of second dielectric material **314** subsequent to the etching process described in connection with FIG. 3. In addition, FIG. 4 includes a conductive material or composite structure **413**.

A third dielectric material **432** can optionally be deposited on the second dielectric material **414** and on the exterior portion (e.g., side **421**, side **321** referenced in FIG. **3**) of via **416**. The third dielectric material **432** is deposited over the poly material **422**. The third dielectric material **432** separates the first ferroelectric material **420** and a second ferroelectric material **434**. In this manner, a multi-bit ferroelectric device as provided, which has a first ferroelectric material **420** and a second ferroelectric material **434** separated by the third dielectric material **432**. That is, the first ferroelectric material **420** separated from the second ferroelectric material **432** by the third dielectric material **432** acts as an electric dipole.

The second ferroelectric material **434** can be the same and/or different ferroelectric material as the first ferroelectric material **420**. Similarly, the first dielectric material **410**, the second dielectric material **414**, and/or the third dielectric material **432** can be the same and/or different dielectric materials. The second ferroelectric material **434** can be deposited at a different thickness than the first ferroelectric material **420**. For example, in at least one embodiment, the second ferroelectric material **434** can be thicker than the first ferroelectric material **420**. In at least one embodiment the thickness of the second ferroelectric material **434** can range between 2-10 nanometers. In a particular embodiment, the thickness of first ferroelectric material can be 3 nanometers and the thickness of the second ferroelectric material can be 6 nanometers.

The first ferroelectric material **420** and the second ferroelectric material **434** can have different coercive fields. That is, the first ferroelectric material **420** can have a first coercive field and the second ferroelectric material **434** can have a second coercive field. As such, the intensity of the bias (e.g., intensity of the voltage, intensity of the current, etc.) that is needed to switch the polarization of the first ferroelectric material **420** is different than the intensity of the bias needed to switch the polarization of the second ferroelectric material **434**. The different coercive fields for the first ferroelectric material **420** and the second ferroelectric material **434** can be accomplished by depositing the second ferroelectric material at a greater thickness compared to the first ferroelectric material **420**. In addition, the different coercive fields for the first ferroelectric material **420** and the second ferroelectric material **434** can be accomplished by depositing a first ferroelectric material **420** that is a different type of ferroelectric material than the second ferroelectric material **434**. When different ferroelectric materials are utilized for the first ferroelectric material **420** and the second ferroelectric material **434**, the thickness of the first ferroelectric material **420** and the second ferroelectric material **434** can be similar and/or the same thickness. That is, the difference in the coercive field between the first ferroelectric material **420** and the second ferroelectric material **434** can be accomplished by utilizing different ferroelectric materials with different intrinsic coercive fields (e.g., natural coercive field).

FIG. **4** illustrates two sides (e.g., interior side **441**, exterior side **442**) of the via **416** with deposited ferroelectric material. The interior side **441** can be on the interior side of the via **416**. The interior side **441** can comprise the first ferroelectric material **420**. The exterior side **442** can be on the exterior side of the via **416**. The exterior side **442** can include the third dielectric material **432** and the second ferroelectric material **434**. After depositing the ferroelectric material **434**, the poly material **422** is removed from the via **416**. The poly material is removed through an etching process to expose the via **416**. As a result, the via **416** now

separates a first multi-bit ferroelectric device **440A** and a second multi-bit ferroelectric device **440B**.

FIG. **5** illustrates a cross-sectional view of a portion of a multi-bit ferroelectric device formed in accordance with embodiments of the present disclosure. FIG. **5** includes a number of elements as described in reference to FIG. **2**, FIG. **3**, and FIG. **4**. For example, FIG. **5** includes a substrate **508** including a conductive contact **512** formed in a first dielectric material **510**. In addition, FIG. **5** includes a via **516** formed through a second dielectric material **514**. In addition, FIG. **5** includes a conductive material or composite structure **513**.

In some embodiments, an etching process (e.g., anisotropic etch, spacer etch, etc.) can be utilized to remove a portion of the second ferroelectric material **534** and the second dielectric material **532**. For example, an anisotropic etching process is utilized to remove a portion of the second ferroelectric material **534** and the second dielectric material **532**. In this example, the anisotropic etching process can remove the second ferroelectric material **534** and the second dielectric material **532** that exists above the via and/or the second ferroelectric material **534** and the second dielectric material **532** deposited on the first dielectric material **514**. That is, the etching process can be a vertical etching process that removes the second ferroelectric material **534** and the second dielectric material **532** that is not within dashed lines **519**.

A conductive material **517** is deposited on the second ferroelectric material **534**. The conductive contact **517** can be made of various conductive materials or composite structures including TiN (titanium nitride), TaN (tantalum nitride), copper, iridium, platinum, ruthenium, and/or tungsten, for example. The conductive material **517** acts as a second plate for the multi-bit ferroelectric devices. The conductive material **517** can be continuous and can be deposited across a plurality of cells and/or can be deposited across an entire memory array.

A first multi-bit ferroelectric device **540A** and a second ferroelectric device **540B** are formed after removal of the poly material (e.g., poly material **442** as referenced in FIG. **4**) from the via **516**. The multi-bit ferroelectric device **540A** represents a first multi-bit ferroelectric device where the ferroelectric material on one side (e.g., the left side **542**) is thicker than a thickness of the ferroelectric material on another side (e.g., the right side **541**). The second multi-bit ferroelectric device **540B** represents a multi-bit ferroelectric device where the ferroelectric material on one side (e.g., the left side **541**) is thinner than a thickness of the ferroelectric material on another side (e.g., the right side **542**).

FIGS. **6A** and **6B** illustrate an example of a write scheme utilizing a multi-bit ferroelectric device (e.g., multi-bit ferroelectric device **540A**, multi-bit ferroelectric device **540B** as referenced in FIG. **5**) formed in accordance with a number of embodiments of the present disclosure. As described herein, the multi-bit ferroelectric device has a first side with ferroelectric material that has a first coercive field and a second side with ferroelectric material that has a second coercive field. In addition, or alternatively, the multi-bit ferroelectric device can have a first side with ferroelectric material of a first thickness and a second side with ferroelectric material of a second thickness. Also, the first side and the second side can be separated by a dielectric material acting as an electric dipole.

FIGS. **6A-1**, **6A-2**, **6A-3**, and **6A-4** illustrate four assigned states to the multi-bit ferroelectric device (e.g., multi-bit ferroelectric device **540A**, multi-bit ferroelectric device **540B** as referenced in FIG. **5**). As described herein,

the multi-bit ferroelectric device has a first side of ferroelectric material **620** (right side of the ferroelectric devices) and a second side of ferroelectric material **634** (left side of the ferroelectric devices) that are separated by a conductive material **613** to form an electric dipole. As described herein, the first side of the multi-bit ferroelectric device and the second side of the multi-bit ferroelectric device have a different coercive field. As illustrated in FIGS. **6A-1**, **6A-2**, **6A-3**, and **6A-4**, the first side of ferroelectric material **620** and the second side of ferroelectric material **634** have different coercive fields by having different thicknesses. For example, the left side of ferroelectric material **634** has a greater thickness of ferroelectric material compared to the right side of ferroelectric material **620**.

The write scheme includes assigning a state (e.g., binary state, numerical value, etc.) to a number of polarization combinations of the multi-bit ferroelectric device. The number of polarization combinations include a first and a second polarization direction for each side of the multi-bit ferroelectric device. For example, a state of 00 is assigned to the multi-bit ferroelectric device **6A-1**. That is, the state of 00 is assigned when the polarization direction (represented by arrow **662**) of the ferroelectric material on the left side **634** is directed towards the conductive material **613** and the polarization direction (represented by arrow **661**) of the ferroelectric material on the right side **620** is also directed towards the conductive material **613**.

The write scheme can use an initial state (e.g., state that is in a particular polarization combination at a particular bias, state 00) and assign a state to the remaining polarization combinations based on a bias applied to achieve the remaining polarization combinations. FIG. **6A-1** illustrates the initial state and assigned the initial state as 00. The initial state 00 in FIG. **6A-1** is changed to state 01 in FIG. **6A-2** by applying a relatively small bias in a first direction. The relatively small bias is a bias that includes a voltage and/or current that changes the polarization direction of the first side (thinner side, right side, ferroelectric material **620** as referenced in FIG. **6A-1**) and does not change the polarization direction of the second side (thicker side, left side, ferroelectric material **634** as referenced in FIG. **6A-1**). That is, the relatively small bias can alter the polarization direction the first side but does not have the voltage and/or current to the change the polarization direction of the second side. The state 01 in FIG. **6A-2** includes the polarization direction of the left side directed towards the dielectric material and the right side directed away from the dielectric material.

The state 01 in FIG. **6A-2** is changed to state 10 in FIG. **6A-3** by applying a bias that includes a relatively large voltage and/or current in a second direction. The relatively large bias is a bias that changes the polarization direction of the first side of ferroelectric material and the polarization direction of the second side of ferroelectric material. The second direction can be an opposite direction from the first direction applied to change the state from 00 to 01. The state 10 in FIG. **6A-3** includes the polarization direction of the left side directed away from the dielectric material and the polarization direction of the right side is directed towards the dielectric material.

The state 10 in FIG. **6A-3** is changed to state 11 in FIG. **6A-4** by applying a bias that includes a relatively small voltage and/or current in the second direction. The bias applied to the state 10 changes the polarization direction of the right side of ferroelectric material without changing the polarization direction of the left side of ferroelectric material. The state 11 in FIG. **6A-4** includes the polarization direction of the left side of ferroelectric material directed

away from the dielectric material and the polarization direction of the right side of ferroelectric material is directed away from the dielectric material. Each state (e.g., state 00, state 01, state 10, state 11) can store a charge equivalent to a single bit DRAM cell charge.

FIG. **6B** illustrates a graph **660** that illustrates a Y-axis that represents a voltage and an X-axis that represents time to further display how a bias is applied to achieve each of the states (e.g., state 00, state 01, state 10, state 11, etc.). The state 00 represents an initial state at a particular voltage at a first time. At a second time the voltage can be applied in a first direction to produce state 01. At a third time a voltage can be applied in a second direction that is opposite to the first direction to produce state 10. At a fourth time a voltage can be applied in the first direction to produce state 11. At a fifth time a voltage can be applied in the second direction to return to the initial state 00.

FIGS. **7A** and **7B** illustrate an example of a write scheme utilizing a multi-bit ferroelectric device (e.g., multi-bit ferroelectric device **540A**, multi-bit ferroelectric device **540B** as referenced in FIG. **5**) formed in accordance with a number of embodiments of the present disclosure. As described herein, the multi-bit ferroelectric device can have a first side with ferroelectric material that has a first coercive field and a second side with ferroelectric material that has a second coercive field. In addition, or alternatively, the multi-bit ferroelectric device can have a first side with ferroelectric material of a first thickness and a second side with ferroelectric material of a second thickness. Also, the first side and the second side can be separated by a dielectric material acting as an electric dipole.

FIGS. **7A-1**, **7A-2**, **7A-3**, and **7A-4** illustrate four assigned states to the multi-bit ferroelectric device. As described herein, the multi-bit ferroelectric device can have a first side of ferroelectric material **720** (right side of the ferroelectric device) and a second side of ferroelectric material **734** (left side of the ferroelectric device) that are separated by a conductive material **713** forming an electric dipole. As described herein, the first side of the multi-bit ferroelectric device and the second side of the second side of the multi-bit ferroelectric device can have a different coercive field. As illustrated in FIG. **6A-1**, the first side of ferroelectric material **720** and the second side of ferroelectric material **734** have different coercive fields by having different thicknesses. For example, the left side of ferroelectric material **734** has a greater thickness of ferroelectric material compared to the right side of ferroelectric material **720**.

The write scheme includes assigning a state (e.g., binary state, numerical value, etc.) to a number of polarization combinations of the multi-bit ferroelectric device. The number of polarization combinations include a polarization direction (e.g., represented by arrow **761**) of a first side of ferroelectric material and a polarization direction (e.g., represented by arrow **762**) of a second side of ferroelectric material **734**. For example, a state of 00 is assigned to the polarization combination of FIG. **7A-1**. In this example, the state of 00 is assigned when the polarization direction **762** of the ferroelectric material **734** on the left side is directed towards the conductive material **713** and the polarization direction **761** of the ferroelectric material **720** on the right side is directed away from the conductive material **713**.

The initial state 00 in FIG. **7A-1** is changed to state 01 in FIG. **7A-2** by applying a relatively small bias in a first direction. The relatively small bias is a bias that includes a voltage and/or current that changes the polarization direction of the first side of ferroelectric material **720** (thinner side,

right side) and does not change the polarization direction of the second side of ferroelectric material **734** (thicker side, left side). The state 01 in FIG. 7A-2 includes the polarization direction of the left side of ferroelectric material directed towards the dielectric material and the polarization direction of the right side of ferroelectric material is directed away from the dielectric material.

The state 01 in FIG. 7A-2 is changed to state 10 in FIG. 7A-3 by applying a bias that includes a relatively large voltage and/or current in a second direction. The relatively large bias is a bias that changes the polarization direction of the first side of ferroelectric material and the polarization direction of the second side of ferroelectric material. The second bias direction can be an opposite direction from the first bias direction applied to change the state from 00 to 01. The state 10 can include the left side and the right side having a polarization direction that is away from the dielectric material.

The state 10 in FIG. 7A-3 is changed to state 11 in FIG. 7A-4 by applying a bias that includes a relatively small voltage and/or current in the second direction. The bias applied to the state 10 changes the polarization direction of the right side of ferroelectric material without changing the polarization direction of the left side of ferroelectric material. The state 11 can include a polarization direction of the left side of ferroelectric material being away from the dielectric material and a polarization direction of the right side of ferroelectric material towards the dielectric material. Each state (e.g., state 00, state 01, state 10, state 11) can store a charge equivalent to a single bit DRAM cell charge.

FIG. 7B can include a graph **778** illustrates a Y-axis that represents a voltage and an X-axis that represents time in order to further display how a bias is applied to achieve each of the states (e.g., state 00, state 01, state 10, state 11, etc.). The state 00 represents an initial state at a particular voltage at a first time. At a second time the voltage can be applied in a first direction to produce state 01. At a third time a voltage can be applied in a second direction to produce state 10, wherein the second direction is opposite to the first direction. At a fourth time a voltage can be applied in the second direction to produce state 11. At a fifth time a voltage can be applied in the first direction to return the multi-bit ferroelectric device to the initial state 00.

The write scheme described herein and referenced within FIGS. 6A, 6B and FIGS. 7A, 7B can include reassigning a number of the states (e.g., state 00, state 01, state 10, state 11, etc.) to correspond to a bias that is different from the previous corresponding bias for the state. Reassigning each of the states to correspond to a different bias and/or correspond to a particular polarization combination between a first side of ferroelectric material and a second ferroelectric material can enable the multi-bit ferroelectric device to be switched from a first state to any second state. For example, the state 01 in FIG. 7A-2 can be reassigned to state 11. In this example, a bias can be applied to the state 00 in FIG. 7A-1 to change the state 00 to state 11 without having to apply intermediate biases. In this example, as described herein, the state 00 in FIG. 7A-1 is changed to state 11 in FIG. 7A-2 by applying a relatively small bias in a first direction. The relatively small bias is a bias that includes a voltage and/or current that changes the polarization direction of the first side of ferroelectric material **720** (thinner side, right side) and does not change the polarization direction of the second side of ferroelectric material **734** (thicker side, left side).

A read scheme can be implemented for each of the write schemes described herein and referenced within FIGS. 6A, 6B and FIGS. 7A, 7B. The read scheme can be similar to a

destructive read scheme for ferroelectric devices. The read scheme utilizes the bias that is applied to the multi-bit ferroelectric device, as described herein. The net polarization from the bias applied to the multi-bit ferroelectric device can be transferred to a bit line within a memory array (e.g., memory array **100**, etc.). The bit line will have states that correspond to the assigned states for each polarization combination within the multi-bit ferroelectric device. That is, there will be four states within the bit line that correspond to the four states (e.g., state 00, state 01, state 10, state 11) assigned to the multi-bit ferroelectric device.

Although specific embodiments have been illustrated and described herein, those of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that an arrangement calculated to achieve the same results can be substituted for the specific embodiments shown. This disclosure is intended to cover adaptations or variations of various embodiments of the present disclosure. It is to be understood that the above description has been made in an illustrative fashion, and not a restrictive one. Combination of the above embodiments, and other embodiments not specifically described herein will be apparent to those of skill in the art upon reviewing the above description. The scope of the various embodiments of the present disclosure includes other applications in which the above structures and methods are used. Therefore, the scope of various embodiments of the present disclosure should be determined with reference to the appended claims, along with the full range of equivalents to which such claims are entitled.

In the foregoing Detailed Description, various features are grouped together in a single embodiment for the purpose of streamlining the disclosure. This method of disclosure is not to be interpreted as reflecting an intention that the disclosed embodiments of the present disclosure have to use more features than are expressly recited in each claim. Rather, as the following claims reflect, inventive subject matter lies in less than all features of a single disclosed embodiment. Thus, the following claims are hereby incorporated into the Detailed Description, with each claim standing on its own as a separate embodiment.

What is claimed is:

1. A memory device, comprising:
 - an array of multi-bit ferroelectric memory cells comprising a first ferroelectric material formed on an interior side of a via and a second ferroelectric material formed on an exterior side of the via, wherein the first and the second ferroelectric materials have different coercive fields; and
 - circuitry coupled to the array and configured to program the cells from an initial state to one of a plurality of different states by applying a bias to the cell to change the electric polarizations of at least one of the first ferroelectric material and the second ferroelectric material.
2. The device of claim 1, wherein the first and the second ferroelectric materials comprise different ferroelectric materials.
3. The device of claim 1, wherein the first and the second ferroelectric materials have different thicknesses.
4. The device of claim 1, wherein the plurality of different states comprises at least three states.
5. The device of claim 1, wherein the initial state and the plurality of different states each comprise a different respective polarization combination corresponding to the first and the second ferroelectric materials, and wherein the circuitry is configured to program the cells from the initial state to a first of the plurality of different states by providing a first

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bias to the cells sufficient to switch a polarization direction of only the first ferroelectric material.

6. The device of claim 5, wherein the circuitry is configured to program the cells from the first of the plurality of different states to a second of the plurality of different states by providing a second bias to the cells sufficient to switch a polarization direction of both of the first and the second ferroelectric materials.

7. The device of claim 6, wherein a direction in which the first bias is applied is opposite to a direction in which the second bias is applied.

8. The device of claim 6, wherein the circuitry is configured to program the cells from the second of the plurality of different states to a third of the plurality of different states by providing a third bias to the cells sufficient to switch a polarization direction of only the first ferroelectric materials.

9. The device of claim 6, wherein a thickness of the first ferroelectric material is less than a thickness of the second ferroelectric material.

10. A memory device, comprising:

an array of multi-bit ferroelectric memory cells comprising a first ferroelectric material formed on an interior side of a via and a second ferroelectric material formed on an exterior side of the via, wherein the first and the second ferroelectric materials have different coercive fields; and

sensing circuitry coupled to the array and configured to sense a state to which a cell is programmed responsive to an applied voltage difference between a selected sense line and a selected access line of the array;

wherein the sensed state of the cell depends on a particular electric polarization combination corresponding to the first and the second ferroelectric materials.

11. The device of claim 10, wherein the first and the second ferroelectric materials comprise different ferroelectric materials.

12. The device of claim 10, wherein the first and the second ferroelectric materials have different thicknesses.

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13. The device of claim 10, wherein the cell is programmable to at least four different electric polarization combinations.

14. The device of claim 10, wherein a dielectric material separates the first ferroelectric material and the second ferroelectric material.

15. A method of sensing data, comprising:

biasing a multi-bit ferroelectric memory cell by applying a voltage difference between a selected sense line and a selected access line; and

determining a particular state of the memory cell responsive to the applied voltage difference;

wherein the multi-bit ferroelectric memory cell comprises a first ferroelectric material formed on an interior side of a via and a second ferroelectric material formed on an exterior side of the via, wherein the first and the second ferroelectric materials have different coercive fields, and wherein the particular state of the memory cell depends on an electric polarization combination corresponding to the first material and the second material.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein the memory cell comprises at least four electric polarization combinations, and wherein determining the particular state includes measuring a bias on the selected sense line responsive to the applied voltage difference.

17. The method of claim 15, wherein the method includes determining the particular state by using a sense amplifier coupled to the selected sense line.

18. The method of claim 15, wherein the first and the second ferroelectric materials have different thicknesses.

19. The method of claim 15, wherein the first and second ferroelectric materials are different materials.

20. The method of claim 15, wherein the method includes biasing the multi-bit ferroelectric memory cell by using a half select biasing scheme.

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